

Washington State Patrol Media Release

Chief John R. Batiste



Captain Jeff DeVere
Government and Media Relations
(360) 753-5299 – office
(360) 753-5469 – fax
<http://www.wsp.wa.gov>

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Contact: Office of Government and Media Relations

Phone: (360) 753-5299

2005 Legislature Changes Law Pertaining to Yielding to Emergency and Police Vehicles

Effective July 24, 2005, Substitute Senate Bill 5038 added a new section (RCW 46.61.212) which requires the driver of any motor vehicle to yield to the right of way by making a lane change or moving away from the lane or shoulder occupied by the emergency vehicle or police vehicle or; proceed with due caution and reduce the speed of the vehicle if changing or moving away from the lane or shoulder is unreasonable or unsafe.

According to the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund, (from 1995 to 2004) 13 officers died in the United States as a result of being struck by a vehicle, and 51 died in auto accidents.

“Safety of our officers and others on the road is our number one priority,” said Chief John R. Batiste. “This bill helps the safety of our officers and other emergency personnel in the state of Washington, providing them with more safety to do their jobs out on our roads”

In addition to the new section, SSB 5038 also modifies the penalties relating to these violations to include a \$500 fine for failure to clear any intersection or stop and remain in such a position until the authorized emergency vehicle has passed, except when otherwise directed by a police officer.

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